

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

By Hal Daumé III, Professor

HB0661

State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty

March 4, 2025

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Hal Daum? III and I am a professor of Computer Science and Language Science at the University of Maryland-College Park, where I have worked for 13 years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining towards nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our four-year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

I conduct research broadly in the area of artificial intelligence and am the lead PI and institute director for the recently awarded \$20m NSF/NIST Institute on Trustworthy AI, TRAILS. I also regularly teach over 150 students per semester on topics related to AI, as well as advise 6-10 students regularly on undergraduate and graduate research.

There are minimal formal contracts that specifies my duties, and, in fact, part of being a professor is a bit like running a startup -- if someone else doesn't do it, I do it myself because it needs to get done. The result of this, together with budget cuts especially to staff positions at universities, the increased enrollment in my field, and the general lack of growth of faculty, means that my workload continues to increase just to keep pace.

Members of the Committee, this state has for decades viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as the best way to promote democracy in our workplaces and public institutions. The right to collective bargaining has long been recognized as not only a fundamental human right, but also as the best method of ensuring that employee voices play a vital role in constructing conditions that govern our workplaces. It is a right granted to many other public higher ed institutions in the nation, and indeed to many private, prestigious institutions in our own state. The reasons to exempt four-year public higher ed institutions from this path make no sense. I again therefore call for a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,

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This testimony has been submitted on behalf of this individual by the United Academics of Maryland.